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ABSTRACT

Some of the major concerns of education stem from the fact that young men and women leave our educational system without sufficient skills to survive in the world of work. Vocational education has a vital role to play in solving the problems related to this situation. The staff at this Research and Development Unit believes the problems can best be solved through planned change strongly based on research and development activities. To facilitate the needed change and to achieve maximum results in meeting individual and manpower needs, a workable model of research, developmental, and exemplary activity must be employed. This, in turn, can be followed by the use of a master plan for the implementation of new programs. Priority areas identified for research and developmental activities are: (1) K-14 coordination and articulation, (2) educational programs in all occupational areas, (3) programs for the disadvantaged and handicapped students, (4) inservice training to update instructors, and (5) comprehensive evaluative techniques for the programs offered. (Author/JS)

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A MASTER PLAN of RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENTAL and EXEMPLARY ACTIVITIES In VOCATIONAL and TECHNICAL EDUCATION

JUNE / 1970

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A Master Plan of Research, Developmental and Exemplary Activities in Vocational and Technical Education

At a time when considerable National criticism is being centered on our educational system, considerable emphasis is being placed on correcting the ills which exist. Major concerns of education stem from the fact that young men and women leave our educational system without sufficient skills required to survive in the world of work. The fact remains that major emphasis in education still is centered around preparing 20% of the students who will someday complete college.

The Nation is now looking toward vocational education for the solution to its educational problems. Vocational education can no longer be designed for someone elses child or as a dumping ground for unwanted students. A dramatic change to an educational system that produces successes not failures, is mandated. This "zero-reject" system should have as its goal the career development of the individual.

The staff of the Research and Development Unit of the Illinois Division of Vocational and Technical Education accepts such a challenge. We realize that planned change, strongly based on research and development activities, is far superior to haphazard action for change sake alone. A workable model of research, developmental and exemplary activities to achieve maximum results in meeting individual and manpower needs must be employed. Such activities will be designed to assist the Division of Vocational and Technical Education in implementing effective programs throughout the State of Illinois. To encourage endeavors in the directions desired, this Master Plan for Research, Developmental, and Exemplary Activities was formulated.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Vocational education as we know it could be compared with a child who is approaching adolescence. The years immediately facing vocational education will be most crucial to its future development. It's adventuresome attitude will encourage experimentation with many new and interesting things. These experiences will be so vital to future growth that they must not be detoured. So many problems rest upon its shoulders that it becomes necessary to expose it to as many alternatives as possible to insure productive growth through its formative years. The objective is to develop an adult who will turn the key to unlock the future for a relevant educational system.

Action must be taken! There is a drastic need for those individuals who sincerely desire to improve the system. New and innovative concepts for education need to be clearly formulated and made operational. New curricula and approaches to teaching must be developed and tested. Evaluative procedures must be derived in order to determine the effectiveness of new and ongoing techniques. When the solutions have been determined, others must be informed so that all may benefit.

The development of vocational education rests in the hands of those individuals who are concerned with the future of all education. These individuals will provide the experiences necessary to develop a mature, relevant, and accountable educational system.

Since no one knows precisely which experiences will be most vital to take vocational education from adolescence to adulthood, several alternatives must be tried. There is no doubt, that throughout adolescence, vocational education will face unfortunate experiences. This is to be expected. Sufficient safeguards must be insured so that ultimately the system will profit from the mistakes that are made. As long as future events can profit from past mistakes, they cease to be called failures.

Let it be said that we are embarking on an educational journey which is unfamiliar to most and at best vague to others. The end result is most uncertain. The challenge is before us. Planned experiences will provide the vehicle for moving vocational education from adolescence to adulthood.

The following subsections list and briefly describe the current priority areas of the Research and Developmen Unit. Some research and development projects will go into depth in a specific priority area while other studies will want to include parts of several areas.

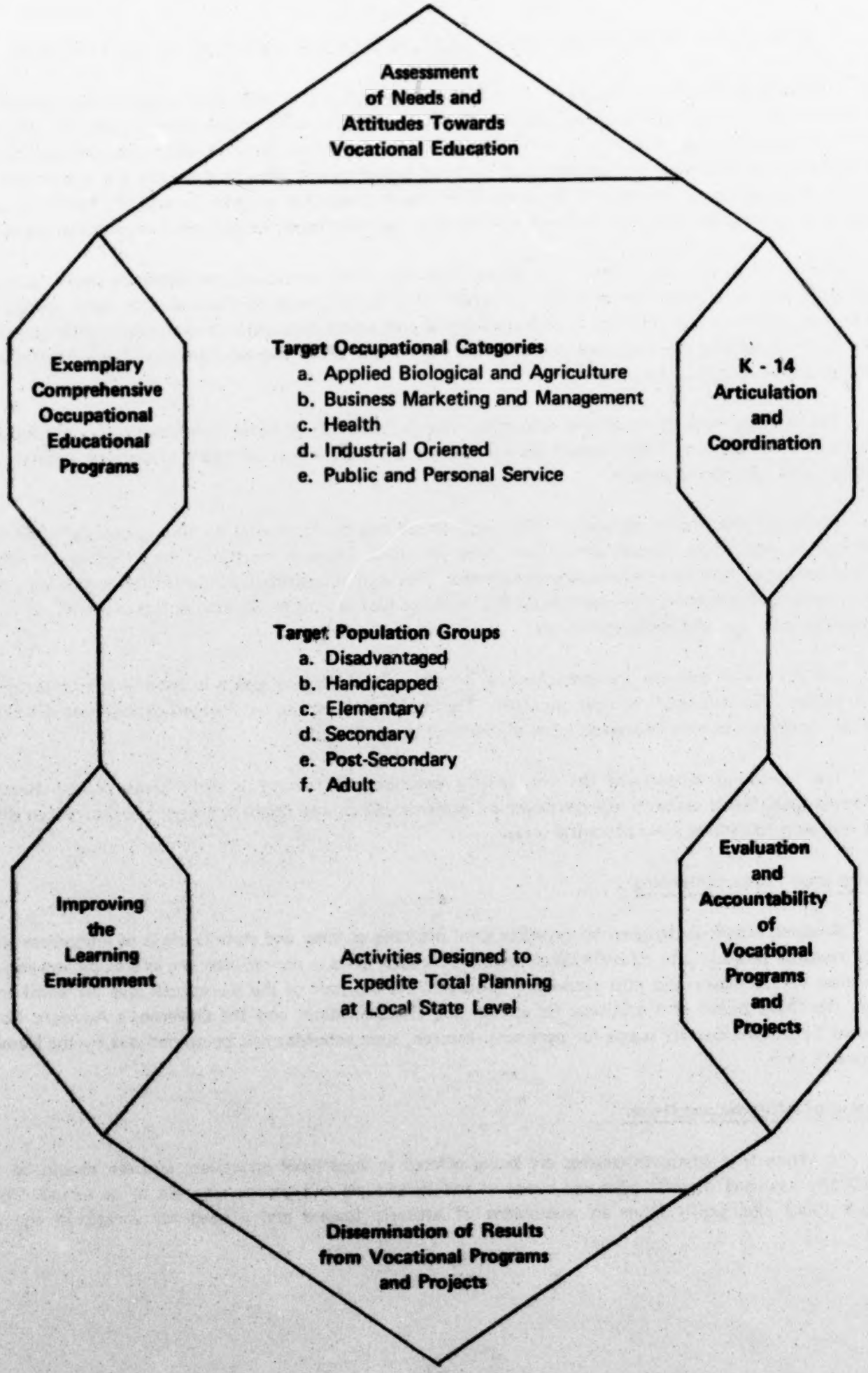
Local and State Program Planning

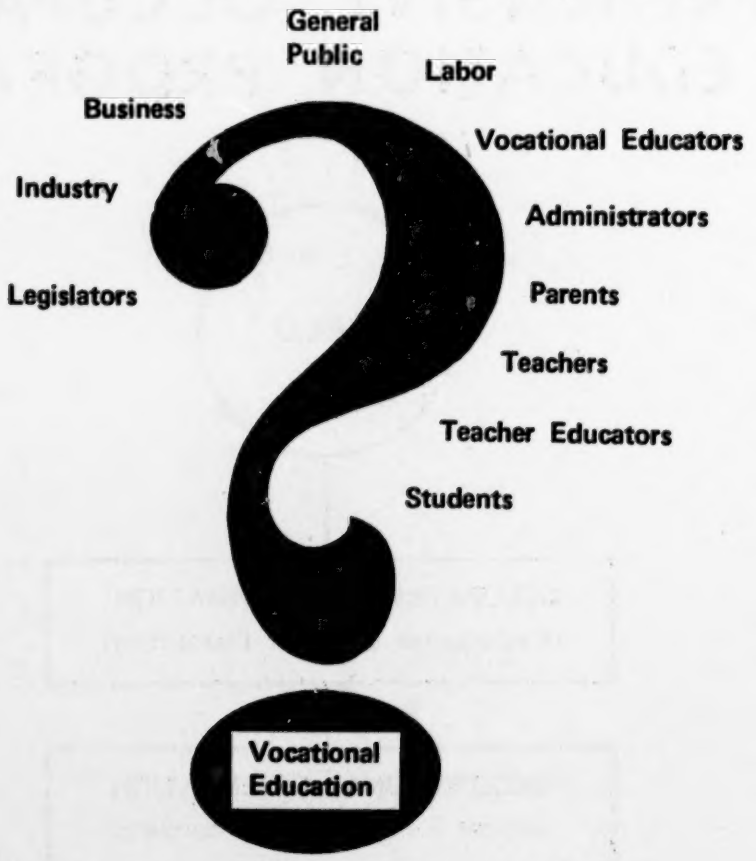
Research activities designed to expedite total planning at local and state levels is of immediate priority. A series of research projects is to be undertaken emphasizing such areas as master planning in area centers and cost and effectiveness of secondary and post secondary programs. As the staff of the Vocational and Technical Education Division, the State Board of Vocational Education and Rehabilitation, and the Governor's Advisory Council on Vocational Education identify needs for pertinent research, such activities will be carried out by the Research and Development Unit.

Assessment of Attitudes and Needs

To insure that adequate courses are being offered in vocational education, concern should be given to systematically assessing the attitudes and needs of the individuals and groups who are to be served. Vocational educators could also profit from an assessment of attitude toward and a need for vocational education in general.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES
Fiscal 1971

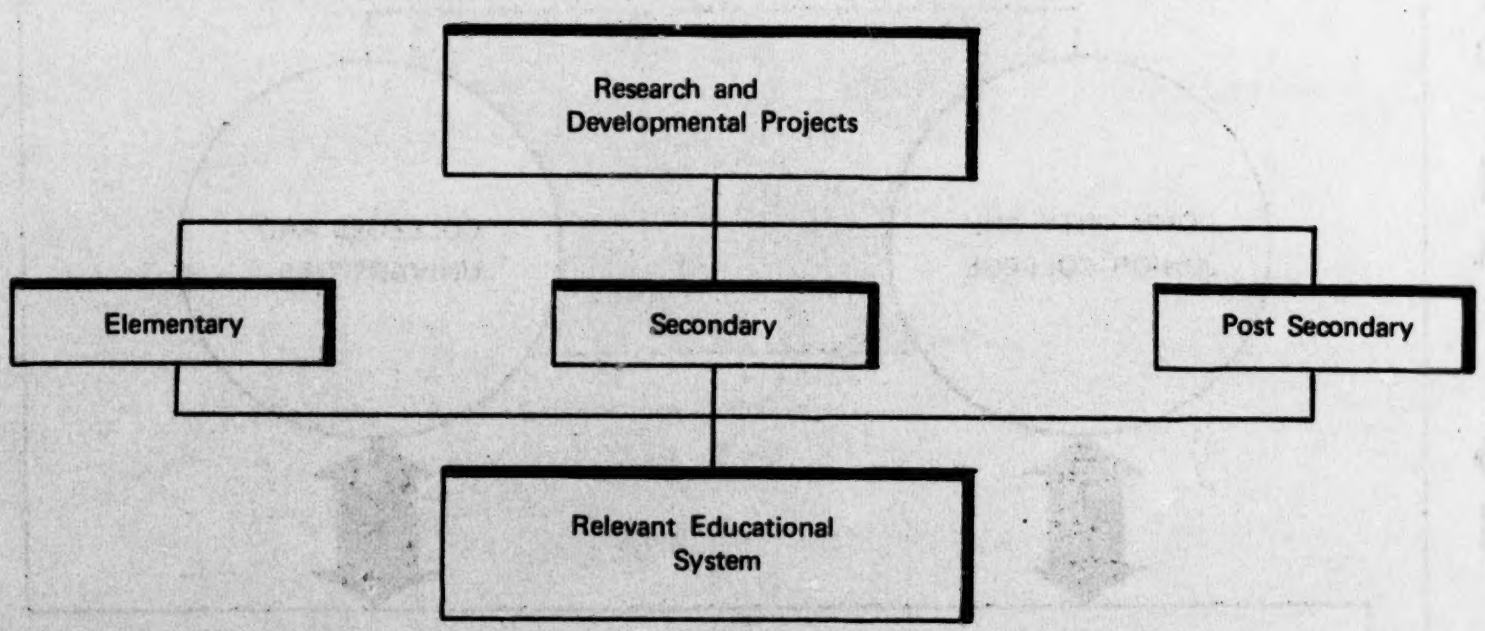

Assessment of Needs and Attitudes Towards Vocational Education
Exemplary Comprehensive Occupational Educational Programs
Target Occupational Categories
a. Applied Biological and Agriculture
b. Business Marketing and Management
c. Health
d. Industrial Oriented
e. Public and Personal Service
K - 14 Articulation and Coordination
Target Population Groups
a. Disadvantaged
b. Handicapped
c. Elementary
d. Secondary
e. Post-Secondary
f. Adult
Improving the Learning Environment
Activities Designed to Expedite Total Planning at Local State Level
Evaluation and Accountability of Vocational Programs and Projects
Dissemination of Results from Vocational Programs and Projects



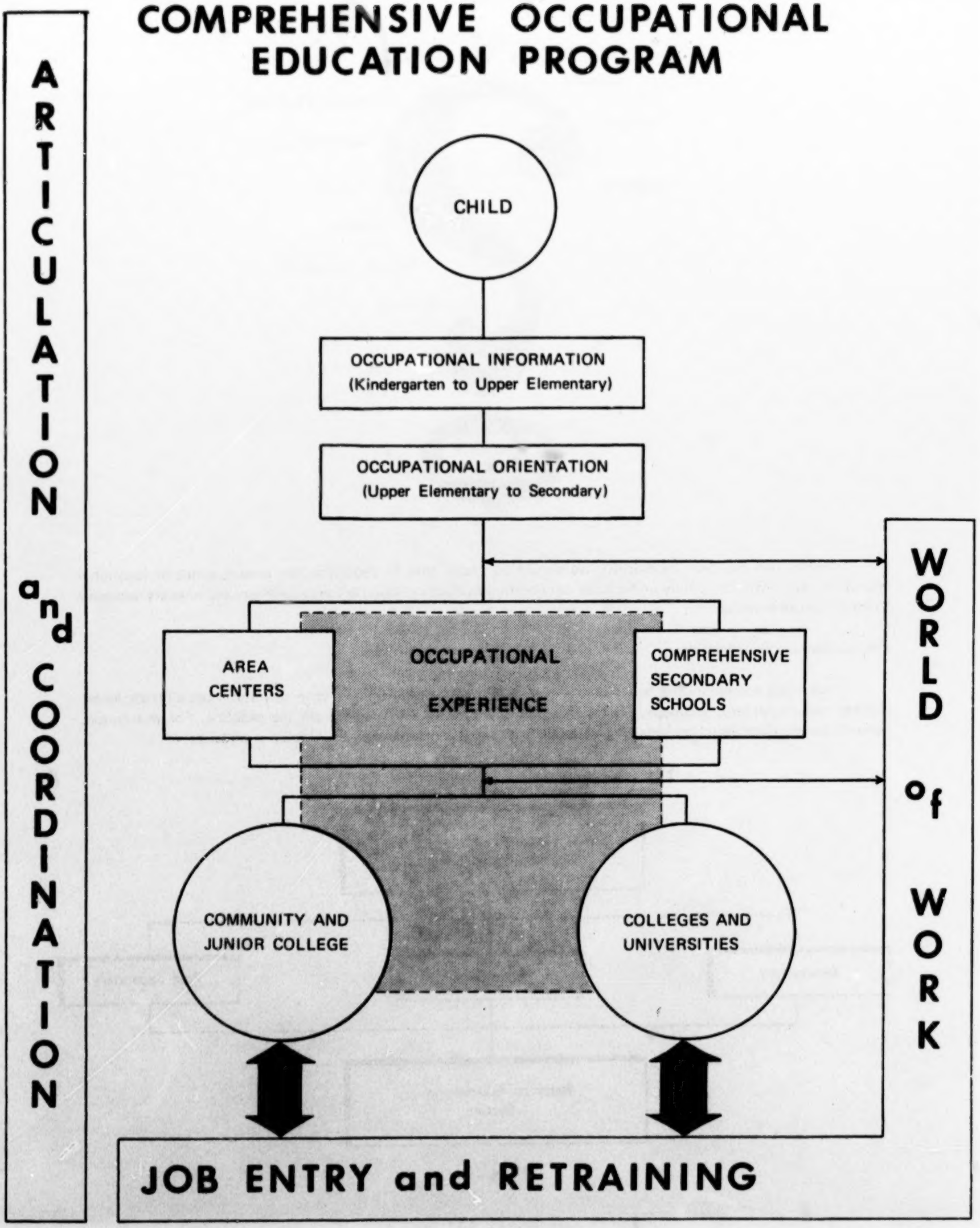
When this has been established, we should be better able to determine the present status of vocational education. Not until this is fully understood can vocational educators provide the experiences and answers necessary to insure future development.

Articulation and Coordination

We must not ignore the fact that the lack of relevancy in educational programs transcends all grade levels. Neither the elementary, secondary, nor post-secondary systems are spared from the problem. For this reason, research and developmental projects which are relevant to existing needs shall be initiated at all levels.



COMPREHENSIVE OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM



Such a system would stress articulation and coordination between all grade levels. Students must progress smoothly through their entire educational program toward the final goal of acquiring the skills necessary to enter the world of work. The transition between administrative structures (one building to another) shall be such that students notice only a change in the physical environment and not a change in educational emphasis.

Comprehensive Occupational Education Program

The researcher and developer must be aware of a comprehensive occupational education program which emphasizes total career development. Such a program will take the young child as he enters school and provide him with the educational opportunities which will help him prepare for the world of work. This system will depend on articulation and coordination as described in the above section.

A comprehensive occupational education program must begin at the elementary level. Information about the world of work can be taught to students at that age. The relevancy of their entire educational process is dependent upon their understanding and grasp of the prospects for the future. Occupational orientation about specific vocations must be provided at the upper elementary and the first years of high school. The results of such efforts should be junior and senior students who are aware of the world of work and equipped to determine the occupational experiences which can provide them with the skills required to enter the world of work.

The schematic of a comprehensive occupational program would provide for educational experiences in all occupational categories. Students would have the opportunity to select courses in any of the following subject matter areas: applied biological and agricultural sciences, business marketing and management, health occupations, industrial oriented, and public and personal services. Such a system would include educational offerings for the following target populations: (1) disadvantaged, (2) handicapped, (3) elementary, (4) secondary, (5) post-secondary, and (6) adults. As sufficient research and developmental activities yield the mechanics and procedures by which these occupational categories can best be presented to the target populations and it has been determined what the course offerings should be, effort can be made to establish model programs at various selected schools throughout the state.

Improving the Learning Environment

Emphasis will continue to be placed on improving the learning environment in our educational system. Although many projects have been conducted for this purpose in recent years, much remains to be accomplished. New and better techniques must be found to teach the ever increasing number of students that will face educators of tomorrow.

When pursuing such projects, the researcher and developer must be cognizant that results should be applicable to instruction in all occupational categories. When this atmosphere exists, repetitious endeavors will be minimized. Emphasis will be toward encouraging projects which have broad applicability.

Evaluation and Accountability

An area of extreme priority for the 70's is one of evaluation and accountability of our educational programs. It is most essential that all research, developmental, and exemplary projects undertaken be especially sound in this respect. The time is past when educators will not be held accountable for the products which they produce. Education will no longer be regarded as an unquestionable process in ones journey to maturity. Since man is most familiar with the term dollar and cents, increased emphasis shall be given to cost-benefit accounting. Much of our accountability will evolve around this commonality. In the process we must not ignore attitudes. The vagueness and uncertainty of this evaluative device has frightened many.

The impact of evaluation and accountability is most apparent among today's educators. A reassuring point

to educational researchers is that more emphasis is being placed on less rigid evaluative techniques. The social sciences will probably never become as sophisticated as the physical sciences. When this is understood, more emphasis can be placed on attitude scales which measure thoughts of persons affected by educational programs.

Educators must be willing to work under the premise that although research results are not entirely correct, they must be tailored to fit specific situations. The results are most certainly not hard-and-fast, but they are closer to the truth than intuition alone.

Dissemination of Results

Researchers and developers must constantly be concerned with providing results which are pertinent to the practitioner. All too often, results from relevant projects are not accepted simply because they are not presented in usable terms. Of prime importance to research, developmental, and exemplary programs is the dissemination of findings which can be utilized by others. The day is past when educators can do research for research purposes only. Proposals must be evaluated on the premise of how many individuals will be effected by the results which are obtained.

Summary

The vastness of the priorities facing vocational education is quite apparent. Some priorities will, by necessity, warrant more attention than others, but all must be dealt with in some aspect. The results are crucial to insuring adequate planning for vocational education at the local, state, and national level.

The Research and Development Unit of the Illinois Division of Vocational and Technical Education will become very instrumental in assuring sufficient research and developmental activities in each priority area. The vision of an educational system which provides: (1) K-14 coordination and articulation; (2) educational programs in all occupational categories; (3) programs for the disadvantaged and handicapped students; (4) in-service training to update instructors; and (5) comprehensive evaluative techniques for the programs offered should be the ultimate goal for which we are striving.

EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS – NEW DIRECTIONS IN 1970 AND 1971

Many problems of our time can be traced back to inadequacies in our educational system. This is not to fault our educational system as being the cause of all problems, but to point out education as the greatest single change agent in our society.

It is evident that our present educational system is not meeting the need of individuals in our communities, our state or the nation. Until recent years, the educational system and society seemed insensitive to various groups in our society. Now there is an awareness and a concern for making our state and country a living democracy.

The needs of these groups are too often contrary to the mass request and demands of society in general, but are of equal importance!

It is common knowledge that each member of a group has different desires and needs. Therefore, the schema for vocational education must not only include the request of a society, but they must also include the requests of sub-cultures and minority groups within the mass society.

Vocational education can not carry in total this awesome burden, but it must be a meaningful sharer of the load. Vocational educators in the past have permitted vocational education to become the dumping ground for the inadequacies in the total educational system. Therefore, instead of allowing vocational education to continue this pattern, we must build vocational education so that it becomes the mainstream of all education

In order to accomplish our goals in vocational education, particularly for exemplary programs, we must; (a) look to the future for final solutions to the problems of today which are directly related to the past; (b) search ourselves for our true convictions and humanistic spirit; (c) broaden the scope to include every target group; (d) reevaluate the goals and plans for a comprehensive education system.

The new exemplary programs funded under Part D of the Amendment of 1968 provides funds to find a partial solution to these pressing problems. But even exemplary programs are ineffective unless they are actually implemented.

The federal guidelines for exemplary programs spell out general objectives for Fiscal 1971. These objectives are as follows:

(1) Exemplary programs must be action oriented, highly successful and innovative.

(2) Exemplary programs must be designed to:

(a) create a bridge between school and earning a living for young people who are still in school, who have left school either by graduation or by dropping out, or who are in post-secondary programs of vocational preparation.

(b) to promote cooperation between public education and manpower agencies, and

(c) to broaden occupational aspirations and opportunities for youth, with special emphasis given to youth who have academic, socioeconomic, and other handicaps.

There are several key goals established for exemplary programs and specific directions for Fiscal 1971.

1. Identify effective on-going or "example-ary" programs which can serve as models for improving occupational education for students of all age and grade levels.

   Example

   a. Programs at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels for youth in school and out-of-school. Programs which are flexible enough to adapt to individual needs in each community in order to meet the needs in different communities.

2. Exemplary programs must focus on new and innovative programs in order to bring about changes in the traditional core curriculum, and such programs must provide a flexible curriculum which is designed to meet the needs of work oriented youth in new and creative ways.

   Example

   a. The establishment of a state-wide occupational information system capable of being adapted and utilized by each individual school district can provide students with the information they need to make a realistic choice of a vocation.

   b. By providing occupational information through research and development activities we can provide the articulation so desperately needed between elementary, secondary, post-secondary systems and world of work.

3. Exemplary programs must attack the basic foundations of poverty or any system that perpetuates poverty by raising the aspiration level of students who have been dubbed failures in our present educational system. These individuals must become involved in our educational system and in the mainstream of our society.

   Examples

   a. Programs designed to provide immediate skill development in job areas where individuals can adequately earn a living and feel productive is a definite need.

   b. Programs aimed at 15–21 year old individuals who have withdrawn from our society for various reasons.

   c. Programs that open doors to minority groups and provide opportunities for advancement in skill areas with minimal time expended.

4. Exemplary programs must be designed to bring about cooperation between manpower agencies and schools to assure a realistic picture of the world of work.

   Examples

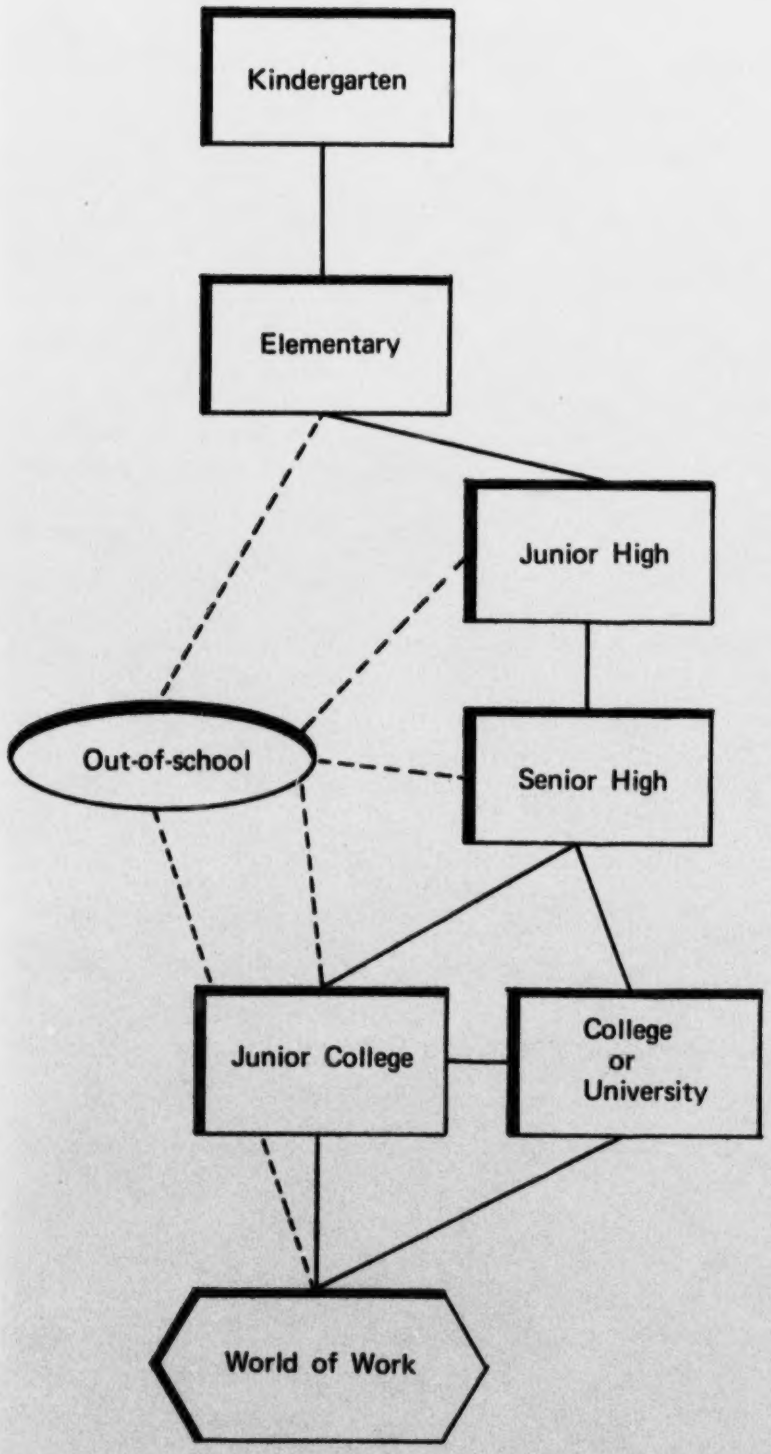
   a. Programs in school systems that present learning experiences which are concrete and not abstract.

   b. Programs such as those for displaced adults which provide articulation between manpower agencies, industries and schools.

In general, exemplary programs must be concerned with orientation and exploration; development of desirable work habits and attitudes; acquisition of job skills; and the improvement of teacher competencies. Of major concern to all exemplary programs is the statement that . . . . . "non-academic college bound youth need at least as much assistance as college bound youth."[1]

[1]A Guide for the Development, Implementation, and Administration of Exemplary Programs and Projects in Vocational Education, Atlanta, Georgia, Sept., 1969

EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS MUST SPAN ALL LEVELS OF EDUCATION



KINDERGARTEN THROUGH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
programs which emphasize attitudes toward work

ELEMENTARY THROUGH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
programs dealing with attitudes but also programs that include occupational orientation which would give students an understanding of the broad areas of our economy

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL THROUGH SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
programs leading to a tentative choice of an occupational goal leading to the development of career preparation serving a wide range of interests, abilities and employment opportunities

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL THROUGH JUNIOR COLLEGE AND SENIOR COLLEGE
Career preparation programs providing students with an opportunity for mobility among various programs to develop career interests

JUNIOR COLLEGE AND COLLEGE INTO THE WORLD OF WORK
post secondary and adult education programs for training and retraining

SCHOOL DROP OUT THROUGH THE WORLD OF WORK
programs geared twoard the drop-out which will allow him to re-enter the educational system at any point in his education and at any point in his life

An articulation model for exemplary programs